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A FORERUNNER OF WarBURTON'S COOK

Warburton's story of the destruction of his old manuscript plays by his cook has been accepted with reservations by many students, and doubted in its entirety by some. Greg, in his article "The Bakings of Betsy" in *The Library* for 1911, taking the most charitable view of Warburton's account of his loss, shows that in all likelihood a large part of Warburton's list of plays came from entries in the Stationers' Register and only a small part from titles of plays actually in his possession. While Greg's explanation of a possible confusion of the two lists, and the reasonableness of the story—for doubtless cooks in various centuries have prized manuscripts for pie baking—may bolster our faith in the antiquary, the following passage, in print before Warburton's day, suggests a possibility that the borrowed list of plays was accompanied by a borrowed story. The supposed editor of *Naps upon Parnassus*, 1658, composed of "Such Voluntary and Jovial Copies of Verses, as were lately receiv'd from some of the Wits of the Universities," after many mock apologies in his "Advertisement to the Reader" for the absence of the author's name on the title-page, continues:

If neither of these two Reasons will satisfie thee, know in the third place, that I indeed do not know, neither can learn his Name. I found these Poems in a dark, blind Ale-house, where the Authour had with a cup too much, obnubulated his Muse, and so forgot, and left them behind. To speak truly, being unwilling to rob the world of so much Ingenuity, (I say) like the desperate St. George, redeem'd these Ethiopian Virgin-Poems, out of the Jaws of that fell Dragon, (the furious gaping Oven) which, (even when I had first bestridden the threshold) yawn'd for them. Much adoe I had to recover Them out of the good Womans hands, who left the bottoms of her Pies (that baking) in very great jeopardy, for want of them: yet at last I did get them, as many as you see there are of them. I am apt to believe there were more once, but the injury of Fate ha's obliterated the rest. As many as could be found, hast thou here (Reader) carefully collected, by the sedulity and expences of

Thy loving Friend

Adoniram Banstittle,

alias Tinderbox.

Dated May 30. 1658
from the *Apollo* in
Fleetstreet

C. R. BASKERVILL